

## The Converb Built with the Suffix *-QAch* (*-qach* / *-ghach* / *-kech* / *-gech*)

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The Wikipedia entry for the term “converb” characterizes it in the following manner:

“a non-finite verb form that serves to express adverbial subordination, i.e. notions like 'when', 'because', 'after', 'while'. ... The term converb was coined for Mongolian by Ramstedt (1903) and until recently was mostly used by specialists of Mongolic and Turkic languages to describe non-finite verbs that could be used either for coordination or subordination. Nedjalkov & Nedjalkov (1987) first adopted the term for general typological use, followed by Haspelmath & König (1995). Other terms that have been used to refer to converbs include adverbial participle, conjunctive participle, gerund, gerundive and verbal adverb (Ylikoski 2003).”

This paper discusses one type of converb in Uyghur, that which is formed with the suffix *-QAch* (*-qach* / *-ghach* / *-kech* / *-gech*). This suffix is mentioned in most reference works, but descriptions of its usage are very brief.

### Literature

Hahn (444) describes it with the words "simultaneous action, impending action, purpose".<sup>1</sup> To call the action "impending" and to speak of "purpose" would need some explicating and substantiating.

Tömür / Lee (290) call it the "adverbial of concurrence" and explain: It "indicates an action which is carried out **in addition (or concurrently) during the course of carrying out another action**".<sup>2</sup> The explanation given in *Hazirqi zaman uyghur tili* (III 1857f.) is identical.

A similar explanation is found in Friederich (209): "This gerund serves to express **an additional<sup>3</sup> action**, i.e. an action which runs parallel in time to the main action named in the following part of the sentence."<sup>4</sup> These definitions hold often true. Important is the "additional / collateral / secondary" character. The actions do not have to be parallel though.

### Function and Usage

1. **The special function of *-QAch* is to express an event that happens in addition to, or in preparation of, a certain main event. It can either be mentioned as an aside, done casually, by the way, or it can be the action that is foremost in the speaker's**

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<sup>1</sup> Since this form does not occur in any of the dialogs, *gac* is only listed in the index.

<sup>2</sup> Original wording (Tömür 279): "*Bashqa bir heriketni orunlash jeryanida qoshumche orunlinidighan heriket bildüridu.*"

<sup>3</sup> Orig. "beigeordnet".

<sup>4</sup> Translation JD.

**mind, but is still placed in the context of the main event, which is assumed to take place anyway.**

2. While the event expressed with *-QAch* usually runs **parallel** or simultaneous to the event of the finite verb, it can also immediately **precede** it, see Ex. 11Ex. 10, Ex. 11 below.

3. The *-QAch*-converb precedes the finite verb, and usually has the same subject as the following finite verb. Sentences with two different subjects seem to be possible, but somewhat artificial.<sup>5</sup>

4. A negative form of this suffix does not exist.<sup>6</sup>

Examples:

Ex. 1. Otturanchisi Sawut kepter baqatti. Her küni etigenliki chéyini ichip chiqip, péshaywanda moxorkisini chekkech danlap yürgen kepterlerge qarap birhaza olturup kétetti, andin uzun yaghachning uchigha baghlanghan qizil latini pulanglitip, kepterlerni hawagha örlitip peyzi alatti. (Hoshur: Bu chüsh emes 128)<sup>7</sup>

*The middle son Sawut raised pigeons. Every day after having his breakfast [lit.: drinking his morning-tea], he left the house and sat down for some time on the verandah [may be the roof of a one-story building], smoking tobacco and watching the grain-picking pigeons, then he enjoyed waving the red rag bound to the tip of a long wooden bar and causing the pigeons to raise into the air.*

This short paragraph is all about Sawut's raising of pigeons. The fact that he smokes while sitting and watching the birds is not in focus, it simply underlines how leisurely he goes about his hobby.

Ex. 2. Shundaq qilip bu hoyligha kélín bolup kelginige emdila üç ay bolghan Jöher her küni chüshkiche kala béqip kélidighan boldi. Aridin töt-besh kün ötüp Ruxsarixan: «Quruq qolingizni sélip kelgüche chöp orughach kelsingiz bolmamdu» dédi. Shuning bilen Jöher her küni bir bagh chöp orughach kélidighan boldi. (Qahar: Kélin 23)<sup>8</sup>

*So Jöher, who had become the daughter-in-law of this family [lit. courtyard] just three months ago, started to take care of the cows every day until noon. After four-five days had passed, Ruxsarixan said: "Rather than coming (home) empty-handed, you should have cut some grass!" Thus Jöher began to cut a bundle of grass every day and take it home.*

The girl's main chore is to attend to the cows. But since this is not a demanding task, she might as well cut grass during that time.

In the next case, handing over a captive is in itself a meaningful thing. Nevertheless it is only part of a bigger event. The context makes clear that there is a messengers' delegation and it has already been determined what answer should be given to them; in the end it is decided that they shall **also** take the prisoner along.

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<sup>5</sup> In this regard it differs from the converb built with the suffix *-QAchQA*, for instance, which does allow for a subject different from the finite verb's subject.

<sup>6</sup> This too is different from the *-QAchQA*-converb, cf. Ex. 12.

<sup>7</sup> This is the only occurrence of a *-QAch*-converb in the whole story of 37 pages.

<sup>8</sup> Again, these are the only two occurrences in the 30-page story.

Ex. 3. Ular buni alghach ketsun. (Ötkür: Iz 277)  
*Let them take him with them as they leave.*

Below, the situation is that there is a guest present and he will be around and sit for a while. In this given circumstance, the point is to offer sweets.

Ex. 4. Mezedin alghach olturung. (Hesen: Taksi shopuri)  
*Help yourself to some of the sweet foods while you sit here.*

There is a difference between the following two examples.

Ex. 5. Tamaq yégech paranglisheyli.  
*Let's talk "over lunch".*

Here, there is something to talk about, and it is proposed where/when to do so. What matters is the talking. But since this might be clear to those involved, what is "new information" is the suggestion to do so over a meal. In contrast, below people want to eat. The speaker wishes to take advantage of the time and have a good talk also.

Ex. 6. Paranglashqach tamaq yeyli.  
*Let's eat and talk.*

Often *-Qach* is used **to ask for a favor**. In the below example, there is no question about the addressee coming home; that will happen anyway. And it is assumed that there is a bakery on the way; the speaker asks for something that can be done – literally – "by the way".

Ex. 7. Sen mekteptin qaytip kelginingde nan alghach kélemsen?  
*When you come back from school, could you bring some bread home?*

*-Qach* can also express **accompanying body movements**.

Ex. 8. Qiz qara chiragh yoruqida, kona bolsimu pakiz yigishturulghan kigiz öyning ichige köz yügürtüp chiqqach, öz öyige kélip qalghandek yéniklik hés qildi. (Ötkür: Iz 8)  
*The girl, as she let her eyes go over the inner part of the old yet tidily cleared-up yurt, in the light of the dim lamp, had a feeling of relief, as if she had come to her own house.*

Ex. 9. Shuningdin kéyin, Shamexsut qapaqlirini türüp, hemmige bir qur köz yügürtüp chiqqach, «Qéni, bu geplerge néme deysizler?» dédi. (Ötkür: Iz 105)  
*After this, Shamexsut, wrinkling his brows and running his eyes over everybody, asked: "Come on, what do you have to say about this?"*

In the next example, *-Qach* serves to mention an action that happens **cursorily in preparation** of the main action.

Ex. 10. Jüme we péshin namazliri oqulup bolush bilenla, Hoshur Imam aldirap ornidin turdi we bir-ikki éghiz erebche ibare oqup ötkech, gélini qirip qoyup gep bashlidi: – ... (Ötkür: Iz 53)

*As soon as he had finished reciting the Friday's and the Peshin [midday] prayers, Imam Hoshur rose quickly from his seat, cited one or two Arabic expressions, cleared his throat and started to talk: ...*

Below the action expressed with *-QAch* is even a **required precondition** for what follows.

Ex. 11. Pashshap öy igilirini chaqirip chiqip, yasawulni öyge ekirishke buyrudi we özi uni silkishtürüp hoshigha keltürgech, néme ish bolghanliqini soridi. (Ötkür: Iz 112)

*The Pashshap [title of government official] called the house owners out, commanded them to take the guard inside, and himself, through shaking making him come back to his consciousness, asked him what had happened.*

### **-QAch as short form of -QAchQA**

N.B.: Tömür / Lee (290) and Friederich (209) point out that the second syllable of the converb *-QAchQA* can occasionally be dropped; the form is then identical to the converb *-QAch*. The two converbs must not be confused. Below are examples for this shortened form of *-QAchQA* from literature.

Ex. 12. Jawab chiqmighach,<sup>9</sup> u ademning üstige éngishti, burnigha jün hariqining sésiqi puridi. (Ötkür: Iz 111)

*Because (!) an answer did not come from him, he bowed over that man; from his nose smelt the stench of Jün alcohol [a kind of drink].*

Ex. 13. Özi seperge hazirlandi. Hazirliqi pütkech,<sup>10</sup> Shamexsut we uning oghli Nezerge, Hashir Teyjige, Qézibeg Ghojigha nurghun sowghat teyyarlap, Nérinkirdin toplanghan yigirme ikki mergenni egeshtürüp yolgha chiqti. (Ötkür: Iz 126)

*Himself got ready for the journey. Since his [personal] preparations were completed,<sup>11</sup> he prepared many presents for Shamexsut and his son Nezer, Hashir Teyji, Qezibeg Ghoja and, taking twenty-two sharpshooters who he had gathered from Nerinkir with him, set out on his way.*

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<sup>9</sup> This could be replaced with the full form *chiqmighachqa*.

<sup>10</sup> This could be replaced with the full form *pütkechke*.

<sup>11</sup> *pütkech* is an intransitive verb.

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